

5 FAH-1 H-500 CONGRESSIONAL LETTERS

5 FAH-1 H-510 LETTERS TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

5 FAH-1 H-511 GENERAL

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. Officers must prepare letters from the Department to Members of Congress for signature by the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs (H). The Secretariat Handbook contains guidelines for Congressional letters to be signed by the Secretary or other Seventh-Floor Principals.

b. Drafters must provide prompt and forthcoming support to Congressional needs for Departmental information. Requests for unclassified information (oral or written requests for written material and oral briefings) should be handled promptly.

c. Requests for classified information may be received in writing by H or directly by bureau officers, who should notify H.

d. Posts receive Congressional letters either through the Department or directly from a Member. When referring letters from the Department to post, officers must instruct the post to either reply directly to the Member, or to provide information for the reply.

e. Posts receiving letters directly from Members of Congress reply directly whenever possible, routing the reply through the appropriate Department office only when policy review is required. See 9 FAM Part IV for instructions for handling letters from Members of Congress regarding visa cases.

f. Congressional letters at post must be opened, logged, and routed to the appropriate action office by the central mail or records unit.

g. When Congressional correspondence of a personal nature is opened by someone other than the addressee, an explanatory note for opening it should be attached and immediately sent to the addressee.

h. The Office of Legislative Affairs (H), or the Central Mail Unit at posts should take follow-up action to ensure that the established time limit for answering Congressional letters is met.

5 FAH-1 H-512 CONTROLLING CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. H will properly log and assign action for responses to Congressional letters under an H Tasking Slip (see 5 FAH-1 H-512 Exhibit H-512).

b. If a Congressional letter is received in an office by facsimile (fax) or directly to a desk without an H Tasking Slip, that office should prepare the response and forward the completed package to H, Correspondence Control Unit (CCU), Room 5917, (202) 647-1608.

5 FAH-1 H-513 RESPONSE TIME LIMITS

5 FAH-1 H-513.1 Responding From The Department

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. In the Department Congressional letters must be answered 7 business days after receipt in the bureau's front office. If a response cannot be prepared within 21 business days, an interim acknowledgment informing the Member of the reason for the delay must be sent (see 5 FAH-1 H-513 Exhibit H-513.1). If information is requested by a certain date and that date cannot be met, the drafting officer must call H (202) 647-1608 to explain the delay.

b. After an interim response, the drafter must send the final response within 10 days unless awaiting information from post, or if clearance outside the drafting office is necessary. Always reference the date of the interim acknowledgment in the final response (see 5 FAH-1 H-513 Exhibit H-513.1, page 2).

5 FAH-1 H-513.2 Responding From Posts

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. Posts must respond to the Department's request to provide input to Congressional letters within 10 days of receipt. If specific information is not available for the response and the matter remains active, posts must submit a status report every 30 days.

b. Officers at posts prepare direct replies from posts to Congressional letters within 5 working days after receipt (see 5 FAH-1 H-513 Exhibit H-513.2). When making an interim response, the drafter must indicate when a final response is expected.

c. To expedite action on Congressional letters the drafter sends a telegram to transmit information to the Department. Telegrams received directly by post from a Member of Congress must be answered by telegram through the telegraphic symbol HCRE. Replies to urgent written inquiries should be handled in the same manner.

d. Officers at posts send other replies by pouch when approved by the principal officer. Letters containing sensitive information must be sent to Members via diplomatic pouch.

5 FAH-1 H-514 TRANSFERS

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. Officers transfer Congressional letters to offices in the Department, post, or to another Federal agency only if the recipient office or agency has been clearly identified and agrees to accept the letter promptly for complete action.

b. At post, if a letter is initially routed to the wrong office, the original action officer must immediately inform the Communication Center of the correct action office and route the letter directly to the new action office.

5 FAH-1 H-514.1 Transfers Within The Department

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. Drafters must call H (202) 647-1608, when transferring a Congressional letter to another bureau in the Department and identify their office (bureau, section, action officer) and the office (bureau, section, action officer) that the letter is being transferred to.

b. If a letter concerning more than one subject is routed to an office for action, do not pass it on to another office for a partial reply. The original drafting officer must make a full reply, obtaining information from other sources as needed.

5 FAH-1 H-514.2 Transfers To Other Agencies

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. If action must be transferred to another agency (except AID; see the *Secretariat Handbook*), the drafter must immediately do the following:

(1) Advise H by telephone (202) 647-1608 and the Member of Congress by letter or by phone.

(2) Forward the letter and a copy of the Department's interim reply to the appropriate agency under Form OF-41 (Routing and Transmittal Slip) cover, signed by the action officer (consult H for names of agency liaison officers to whom to address Form OF-41).

b. See letter, Form OF-41, and assembly instructions at 5 FAH-1 H-514 Exhibit H-514.2.

5 FAH-1 H-515 TYPES OF CONGRESSIONAL REPLIES

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

Members hold various positions within Congress, so drafters should be careful to reply to Congressional letters based on the type of letter received. One should use common sense or an established precedent for some replies. A reply should be addressed to a Member as chairman of a committee or subcommittee only when the incoming letter was signed by the Member as Chairman, not because the letter is written on committee letterhead. The following instructions apply to more specific replies.

5 FAH-1 H-515.1 Reply To Letter Signed By More Than One Member

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. Drafters prepare individual replies to each Member who signed the letter and state in the first paragraph that the same reply is being sent to the others.

b. For large jobs, create the first original and obtain clearance(s) and signature. Print out the remaining letters in the drafting office to be autopenned in the Legislative Correspondence Unit.

5 FAH-1 H-515.2 Reply To District Office

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

Drafters send replies to letters received from the district office to the district office unless instructed to send elsewhere. Always address response to the Member, although inquiry may be from a staff member.

5 FAH-1 H-515.3 Reply Direct To Constituent

a. Drafters prepare direct replies from the Department signed by the drafting office. The drafting office also sends a copy of the response directly to the Member after notifying H at (202) 647-1608.

b. Drafters from post prepare replies for signature by the drafting office with a copy to the Member under a transmittal letter.

5 FAH-1 H-515.4 Reply From Other Than The Assistant Secretary For Legislative Affairs (H)

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. For letters addressed to a Department official (Assistant Secretary or above) by name, the official signs only if it is evident that the letter is personal and the official is expected to sign. The drafter clears the reply with the appropriate program office(s) and H before dispatch through IPS/PSD. Otherwise the reply is prepared for H signature with a lead-in sentence stating "I am replying to your letter of (date) addressed to (name) concerning (subject)."

b. When a letter is addressed to a Foreign Service Officer by name, the officer may sign the letter if the officer is well known to the Member or if it is evident from the letter that the Officer is expected to sign the reply. The reply must be cleared with H prior to dispatch.

c. If the incoming letter is signed by a staff member, the drafter addresses the letter to the Member but marks the envelope for the attention of the staff member.

5 FAH-1 H-515.5 Reply To The Office Of A Deceased Member

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

A reply which answers a letter that was received before a Member's death is addressed to a Member's administrative assistant or secretary.

5 FAH-1 H-516 SALUTATION

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. When preparing a Congressional letter for the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, the drafter must use one of the following salutations:

(1) Dear Senator_____: (To a U.S. Senator (male or female));

(2) Dear Mr. or Ms._____: (To a Member of the House of Representatives);

(3) Dear Mr. or Madam Chairman: (To a male or female Member as chairperson of a committee or subcommittee);

(4) Dear Mr. or Madam Speaker: (To the Speaker of the House of Representatives);

(5) Dear Mr. or Madam President: (To the Vice President of the United States, i.e., the President of the Senate).

b. When preparing a congressional letter for the Secretary's signature, the Secretariat Staff (S/S-C) should be consulted for the appropriate salutation.

5 FAH-1 H-517 CLEARANCES

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. In the Department, the drafter must include the initials of the preparing office director and other appropriate clearances on the record copy of Congressional correspondence.

b. Post should clear direct replies to Congressional inquiries with the chief of the section and other officers as required by the subject matter. Include the initials of the chief or deputy chief of mission, or the principal officer on Congressional correspondence forwarded to the Department for policy clearance.

c. Drafters should obtain telephone clearance whenever feasible and written clearances when the subject matter is complex or sensitive.

d. Preparers should include as a part of the drafting information if the letter is cleared in substance, draft, or by phone by placing the type of clearance in parenthesis. In such cases the drafting official places initials by the name of the clearing officer.

e. Drafters should always get one other person to clear and initial the record copy.

5 FAH-1 H-518 CLASSIFICATION AND DECLASSIFICATION MARKING

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)

a. Classified letters must show an original classification authority and must be marked according to the requirements of Section 1.7, E.O. 12958. Drafters must mark each element of the document (title, subtitle, paragraph, section, chart, or table) as TS, S, C, or U.

b. In the lower left corner, enter "Classified By" followed by the name and position of the original classification authority and the agency and office of origin, unless otherwise indicated. Also show the reason(s) for classification, citing the appropriate classification category(ies) in Section

1.5, E.O. 12958.

c. Place the overall classification of the letter flush with the left margin underlined in capital letters. Center the classification at the bottom of the page and place the declassification information directly below the classification on the first page only. If there are downgrading instructions in addition to the declassification instructions, enter this information on the same line.

EXAMPLE: Downgrade to CONFIDENTIAL 10/16/2006; DECL:
10/16/2021

d. Do not place the word "Unclassified" on unclassified Congressional letters.

e. Enter the classification at the top and bottom of subsequent pages. See 5 FAH-1 H-132 for additional guidance on portion marking, marking foreign government information, derivative classification marking and downgrading.

5 FAH-1 H-519 UNASSIGNED

5 FAH-1 H-512 Exhibit H-512
BUREAU OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
TASKING SLIP

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DATE: _____

BUREAU OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
TASKING SLIP
CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE DUE
IN H
Room 5917: _____
(Control Number)

ACTION ASSIGNED TO:

ACTION REQUESTED:

_____ REPLY FOR SIGNATURE BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS.

_____ REPLY FOR SIGNATURE BY _____

_____ UNDER COVER OF AN ACTION MEMO TO _____
DIRECT REPLY TO CONSTITUENT FOR SIGNATURE BY OFFICE
DIRECTOR.
Mail a copy to appropriate Congressional Office indicated on incoming letter.
Call extension below when completed.

_____ REPLY BY PHONE TO CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE.
Call H extension below and provide date of call and name of Congressional staffer
contacted when completed.

_____ AIL REQUESTED PUBLICATION TO CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE.
Address envelope "FOR ATTENTION OF" the appropriate Congressional staff.
No cover letter necessary. Call extension below when completed.

_____ FOR YOUR INFORMATION. NO RESPONSE NECESSARY.

_____ OTHER. SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS BELOW.

*Bureau must call extension below if action is transferred to another bureau.

REMARKS/SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

UNCLASSIFIED UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

FROM: _____
CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE UNIT
EXT: 71614/71608

5 FAH-1 H-513 Exhibit H-513.1 INTERIM REPLY--DEPARTMENT

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

(leave room for date)

Dear Ms. Smith:

This exhibit shows the proper format for Congressional correspondence. Use 1-1/2" margins and indent paragraphs five spaces. Place the address at the bottom of the page.

Thank you for your letter of June 25, inquiring about the welfare and whereabouts of Sr. Jose Martinez, who is in the Dominican Republic.

Your letter has been forwarded to the American Embassy in Santo Domingo for a report. I will notify you as soon as a reply is received.

**(30 spaces)
(5 lines)**

Sincerely,

**(30 spaces)
(30 spaces)
(30 spaces)**

**John E. Doe
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs**

**The Honorable
Mary A. Smith,
House of Representatives.**

Continuation - 5 FAH-1 H-513 Exhibit H-513.1



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Doe:

This exhibit shows a sample final Congressional response from the Department. Always reference the date of the incoming letter.

Thank you for your letter of May 16, concerning Mr. William Lewis, who desires employment with the Department of State.

It is always a pleasure to learn of a young person's interest in service with the Department of State. Enclosed is complete information on careers with the Department. The most promising opportunity for an officer level position is through the Foreign Service Officer Examination. The next examination will be given on December 6, 1998. An announcement with application card is enclosed. I can assure you that Mr. Lewis will be given every consideration.

(30 spaces)
(5 lines)

Sincerely,

(30 spaces)
(30 spaces)
(30 spaces)

John E. Dolby
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

Enclosures;

1. Correspondence returned
2. Departmental Employment Kit

The Honorable
Henry L. Doe,
House of Representatives.

5 FAH-1 H-513 Exhibit H-513.2

CONGRESSIONAL REPLY—POST (FINAL)

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)



Embassy of the United States of America

Sofia, Bulgaria

May 5, 1996

Dear Mr. Black:

This exhibit shows the proper format for Congressional correspondence from post. Include the date at the time of preparation unless otherwise instructed. Align the date with the post letterhead as shown above. In the case of letterhead that is centered at the top of the page, align the date with the right margin. In some cases, post letterhead has "Embassy of the United States of America" or "Consulate General of the United States of America," preprinted at the top of the page without the post location. On such stationery, identify the post (city and country) two lines below the letterhead. For example:

CONSULATE GENERAL
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Hong Kong, B.C.C.

Indent five spaces at the beginning of each paragraph. Use 1 ½" margins and place the address at the bottom of the page.

For a Member of the House of Representatives, use the salutation "Dear Mr. or Ms." only; for U.S. Senators, use "Dear Senator (name)"; and for the Speaker of the House, use "Dear Mr. or Madam Speaker." When a letter is to a Member in his or her capacity as chairperson of a committee or subcommittee, use "Dear Mr. or Madam Chairman."

The Honorable
John A. Black,
House of Representatives.

Continuation - 5 FAH-1 H-513 Exhibit H-513.2

-2-

Use plain bond paper for the second page. Center the page number at the top of the second page, two lines below the top margin.

Add enclosures and information copies after the signing officer's name. If there is more than one enclosure, single space and number them as shown below. Place drafting information on file copies or a drafting page.

Sincerely,

Mary E. White
Title

Enclosures:

1. Travel Report
2. Sunday Times Article

Continuation - 5 FAH-1 H-513 Exhibit H-513.2



Embassy of the United States of America

Tokyo, Japan

May 5, 1997

Dear Ms. Smith:

In the temporary absence of Mr. Brown from Sofia, I am replying to your letter of April 29, expressing your continuing interest in the proposed immigration of John J. Johnson, the brother of James Johnson, 1500 Main Street, Chicago.

John J. Johnson has been requested to visit this office at his convenience for a review of his case, including all evidence of his name, identity, and relationship to the petitioner, Mr. James Johnson.

I will write you again following the interview with John F. Johnson.

Sincerely,

**John E. Doe
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs**

**The Honorable
Mary A. Smith,
House of Representatives.**

5 FAH-1 H-514 Exhibit H-514.2
TRANSFERRING CONGRESSIONALS TO
ANOTHER AGENCY

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

(leave room for date)

Dear Senator Burns:

Thank you for your letter of June 1, 1997 regarding the interest of your constituent, Mr. Steven M. Brown, in making a gift of books to India.

Since this matter falls within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Information Agency, I am referring your letter to Mr. Joseph White, General Counsel, for reply. Mr. White can be reached on code 182, extension 4090.

(30 spaces)
(5 lines)

Sincerely,

(30 spaces)
(30 spaces)
(30 spaces)

John E. Doe
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

The Honorable
John A. Burns,
United States Senate.

Continuation - FAH-1 H-514 Exhibit H-514.2

| ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP | | Date June 7, 1997 | |
|---|--------------|----------------------|------------------|
| TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post) | | Initials | Date |
| 1. Mr. Joseph White DOD/OIG Pentagon, Room 528 | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| X | Action | File | Note and Return |
| | Approval | For Clearance | Per Conversation |
| | As Requested | For Correction | Prepare Reply |
| | Circulate | For Your Information | See Me |
| | Comment | Investigate | Signature |
| | Coordination | Justify | |

REMARKS

A copy of State's Interim reply is attached.

DO NOT use this form as a RECORD of approvals, concurrences, disposals, clearances, and similar actions.

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| FROM: (Name, org. symbol, Agency/Post) | Room No.—Bldg. 4536 NS |
| A/IM/RM:BCDoe | Phone No. 5831 |

5041-102

OPTIONAL FORM 41 (Rev. 7-76)

☆ U.S. GPO: 1990 - 282-080

Prescribed by GSA
FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.206

5 FAH-1 H-518 Exhibit H-518
CONGRESSIONAL REPLY (CLASSIFIED)

(TL:CH-2; 05-30-1998)



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

(leave room for date)

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mr. Chairman:

(C) This a a sample classified Congressional reply. The classification markings are for exhibit purposes only. See 5 FAH-1, H-518 for instructions for classified letters to members of Congress.

(U) Thank you for your letter of June 1, advising the Department that several members of your Committee plan to visit Paris during July. Representatives of the Department have been working with staff members of the Committee to make the necessary arrangements for the Committee's travel. I hope that these arrangements will be satisfactory and that you and members of your Committee will have a most pleasant and worthwhile trip.

**(30 spaces)
(5 lines)**

Sincerely,

**(30 spaces)
(30 spaces)
(30 spaces)**

**John E. Doe
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs**

**The Honorable
John F. Smith, Chairman,
Committee on Foreign Relations,
United States Senate.**

CONFIDENTIAL

**Classified by: Henry M. Aims, Director, A/RM, Reason 1.5(B)
Declassify on: 7/14/99**

CLASSIFIED FOR EXHIBIT PURPOSES ONLY